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THE
YALE LITERARY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXI.

JULY, 1856.

No. VIII.

EDITORS FOR THE CLASS OF '57.

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Public Opinion.

EVERY man must be profited by sometimes studying out carefully all the influences which control his conduct. Some of these influences, such as conscience, love of friends, or fear of punishment from neglect of duty, occur to us at once. But others, whose action is more silent and on our part involuntary, are apt to be overlooked. Among this latter class is to be reckoned Public Opinion. In all organized society, it is a power which exceedingly affects the action both of individuals and governments. True, in a multitude of cases it does not affect a man's personal comfort, or the love of his intimate friends, yet no one disregards it. It is important, therefore, to have some idea of the methods through which it acts, and the degree to which its influence may be properly allowed.

We will not waste much time in defining the meaning of a phrase which every American ought so well to understand. Sometimes Public opinion is—not what you, or your friend, or any one with whom you personally converse, believes upon a subject; but what is “generally thought.” Sometimes it is that which compels everybody to dress, act, and speak contrary to his own good taste and good sense, lest other-

wise "everybody" should think it strange. And sometimes it is that real, universal sentiment, which constitutes an almost irresistible power.

The opinions of the "Public" are created in almost as great a variety of ways as those of individuals. In some cases, persons in authority, each in his own department, the Tailor in his shop, the Editor in his sanctum, or the President "with the advice and consent" of the leaders of his party, concoct and present them for unconditional acceptance. In others, a few individuals of the noisier sort parade their views so vauntingly and constantly that the Public believes they are really its own, and more sensible men falsely conclude themselves in the minority. But oftentimes public opinion is created by honorable means;—by the experience or convictions of every individual, or the thorough discussion of subjects by the orator and press. And though it is true in general that the opinions of the public are not free from the same prejudices which modify those of every member, yet in the compound, the evils so neutralize each other as to be less detrimental.

The public condescends to *have* an opinion, on a great variety of points, yet its subjects are generally of some importance. He who directs his thoughts to subjects upon which there is a well defined public opinion, will not commonly dwell upon trifles, but will receive enlargement of mind. The constant elevation of the range of subjects of public thought is a pleasing accompaniment of advancing enlightenment. Probably no community of men, however degraded, ever existed without public opinion. Even among brutes, we must go to the most savage before we lose all traces of it. The Indian is directed by the sentiment of the majority in his habit of dress and mode of life. But in rude society, or even in that called civilized, where the common people are totally ignorant, popular opinion respects only external and insignificant matters. As the people rise, questions of Religion and Politics, of Science and Taste, come within their grasp. And particularly where they often *act* together, (as in a Democracy,) their opinions become more well grounded and influential.

And not only is progress shown by the direction of Public Opinion to more dignified subjects, but by the broadening of that which *constitutes* the public. Among savages, it can hardly be more than a small tribe. The old Greeks cannot have included in it more than their own nation, when they reckoned all others barbarians. We realize now an idea which could never have entered the mind of Homer, that a common public opinion should so pervade a family of nations as to be a guide to each. This dignity of popular opinion, though advantageous, makes it important to beware lest we preserve too little chivalrous independence of character.

It may not be uninteresting, with no attempt at logical division, to look at some of the every-day good and bad effects of this power. The study of its influence in the past upon governments, is what constitutes much of the charm of history to the philosophical or political reader. Where there is a public opinion, it always acts beneficially upon a government, and sometimes with sublime force. Over particular classes, too,—as statesmen, or authors—it exerts a peculiar power which is worth considering; but we shall glance only at that which is common to all.

In *external* matters, public opinion is called fashion. We suppose the power of fashion to be as old as man's ability of imitation. Doubtless there was a fashion in the Ark. Probably the fair Jewesses of old would not have worn nose jewels and tinkling ornaments for the feet, for the sake of beauty or convenience, had they not been proof positive of gentility. We learn that fashion elicited moustaches from the lip of a Spartan youth, as assiduously as it now does from that of an aspiring young American. Periwigs and ruffled shirts were part of the tribute which our ancestors paid to this divinity. Now, portentous looking cylinders for the head, and dresses of hogshead shape, are among the tithes required. Certainly fashion has given currency to many violations of common sense, and not a few active brains find constant exercise in keeping pace with the progress of the millinery art. But if public opinion did not force all to conform to its own enactments, would taste and good sense be outraged any the less?

Upon *manners*, the influence of public opinion is almost solely good. Since organized society is that out of which they arise, it seems proper that the general consent should regulate them. He who despises the civilities and decencies of life as mere outside show, proves that he has very little courtesy of heart. He who aims at little oddities in dress and manners, appears afraid (justly) that his originality will not otherwise become known. There have been attempts, indeed, to heap upon society such a mass of forms and ceremonies that a man who understood them would understand nothing else; but such law-books are in little danger of being adopted as the public standard. Until this is the case, common opinion is the best guide.

Far more important is the influence of public opinion on our *intellectual* notions and habits. The great danger involved is the surrender to it of a modest, sensible independence. Some are so fairly under its control, as to look for their opinion of a book or a public measure in the newspapers. We are liable to be led by it to the excessive cultiva-

tion of some particular mental power, to the neglect of those which sound judgment tells us are more valuable. It often cramps originality, by causing all to be subjected to the same routine of instruction, and expecting similar results from all. Yet, frequently, public opinion, by ridiculing absurdities, and demanding certain excellencies, greatly benefits a writer and speaker. Whether it set in a right or wrong direction, its current is very powerful. The manly way is to adopt it when right, and when wrong, to aim to do so well as to attract it from its error.

But public opinion takes hold of everything, and its most important bearings are upon moral questions. Here it is with that good-natured personage, "The Public," as with other individuals;—where it is not personally concerned its opinion is likely to be just; in other cases there is danger of prejudice. In almost every community, there are particular evils to which the public eyes are closed, which a candid conscience must condemn. There are certain classes of offenders who (in comparison with others really more despicable) are too harshly judged. Yet many, too weak or irresolute to adhere to any other rule, adopt the standard of public opinion. And others, without doing this, are so cautious and timorous in acting, much more in speaking their sentiments, that their opposition is like that of a bulrush to a torrent. Our political system is degraded by this subserviency to public opinion. To take but a single point: Nominating Conventions are so wholly controlled by the amount of popular *furor* which they believe, or pretend to believe, a candidate can raise, that merit becomes an entirely secondary consideration. And yet, though some are tempted by fear of public opinion to violate manly convictions, it is undeniable that some are preserved by the same influence in the decencies of appearance and morality. It is a good restraint, but a very imperfect guide.

In no respect does College appear more like a little separate world, than in the distinctiveness of our public opinion. We have our literary canons, and woe be to him who entirely disregards them. Really, in spite of our inexperience, the opinion of a friendly and honest literary community like ours ought to be very useful to a tyro in correcting faults and encouraging excellencies. The opinion of such a body upon *any* subject, (without claiming that it is the concentrated wisdom of all ages,) is worthy of fair consideration from all quarters. Our College standard of honor and character is high. But we need the cultivation of independence, lest that unity of action which is usually so pleasant and advantageous should stifle honest opposition to what is wrong.

The Lit. is not a Censor of the public morals; (though two of the Editors were unanimously elected to that office by their appreciating brethren.) But it is plain, that nothing will more effectually annihilate in a man all spirit and nobleness, than the becoming a mere echo of that opinion which is most common or most noisy. Hereafter, as educated men, we shall be peculiarly able to be independent of public opinion; and it is surely desirable that we should take some lessons now in controlling it in a genial way, as well as in being its humble servants.

H. S. H.

Punsters.

A DISQUISITION IN THE HORTATORY STYLE.

“There be some which are fain to make great ado in the perverting of goodly words from the true intent thereof: whereby they do greatly err, inso-much as this abomination most assuredly hath its origin of ye Divell.”

Old English.

“From those who pursue us
Like reptiles carnivorous,
And besiege us with quibbles
Whene’er they *diskiver* us,—
From Punning and Punsters,
‘Good Lord, deliver us!’ ”

Poet Cochleareate.

WE read that once upon a time an army of peripatetic frogs “wandered through the wilderness of this world,” and finally sat themselves down in old Egypt to have a sing. Howbeit, the good people relished not the entertainment, and frog-solos, with a full “choriouse,” fell into great disfavor: so much so that the yellow croakers hopped off in high dudgeon, and have never since attempted to “tune their harp” for the edification of mankind: but through long years their simple melody has “wasted its sweetness on the desert air.”

If any one is moved to compassion by the frog-persecution of the Egyptians, he is earnestly requested to bestow a small quantity of commiseration upon us, who “drink from this venerable stream of Science,” for we are kept in continual agony by a plague more terrible than all the frogs which Aaron and the magicians brought up from the waters,

and which "did squeak and gibber" in the ovens and kneading troughs of Pharaoh's household; and more numerous than all the tadpoles which ever wiggled their devious way through the bogs of the Nile. We are beset by a horde of babblers—vain talkers—who start up before us at every turn, and discharge a battery of squibs in the face of the soberly-minded individual. "In short," to use the eloquent and expressive formula of the immortal Mr. Micawber, (whose name be exalted!) "in short, they make puns."

Now, to these well-meaning but misguided personages, we wish to make a few remarks, both out of regard to their own welfare and out of compassion for the rest of mankind. We are moved thereto solely by a spirit of philanthropy, for it is painful to any lover of his species to see valuable time and talents squandered for the purpose of producing a feeble giggle, coupled with a strong feeling of contempt for the murderer of the "King's English."

Almost everybody is afflicted with a desire to be thought witty. The ability to raise a laugh is esteemed much more highly than the power to influence the reason or feeling of men. It is considered more desirable to distort the muscles of half a dozen faces than to control the head or heart of a whole people. Hence, a large number of youth are content to spend their energies in the aforesaid direction. Unable to aspire to the higher departments even of this humble calling, they establish themselves in a sort of retail business in the pun line—become penny brokers to facilitate the circulation of jokes of a small denomination, and oftentimes gain considerable notoriety, as dealers in the "fiddler's change" of witticism.

The ancient Britons had among their domestic appurtenances a professional "Fool," whose duty it was to say silly things, in order that his master might have some excuse for laughing uproariously while he was under the benign influence of a half gallon of beer. When a man is mollified and jollified in such wise, as our revered ancestors often were, it is quite possible that buffoonery may be tolerable. At any rate, they showed their good sense in appointing a special rank of persons whose "calling" it was to make puns, and they further showed their discrimination by elevating to this office those only who were good for nothing else: and if it were possible among us to have a class of aspirants, duly set apart and consecrated to the sublime art of punning, we think it would be a most decided improvement, insomuch as it would at once place them in their true position, and relieve others from the necessity of mingling with the "Order," except on such occasions as their fancy might dictate.

As it is, one can hardly pass through the College yard without being assailed continually, and before the trial is past, he is not unfrequently wearied nigh unto death by the wordy discharges of small shot which have been aimed at him from every window and from beneath every tree by the wayside. Even reserved and dignified seniors, of whom the world has a right to expect something better,—to whom the benighted “lower classes” look with implicit confidence for an example in all things,—and upon whose shoulders the responsibility of preserving the existence of the College, and of maintaining all the great interests of humanity in general, is supposed, in a great measure, to rest; even these exalted and immaculate mortals are wont to debase their lordly intellects by making puns which would disgrace the veriest dunce that ever bestrode the three-legged stool under the direction of a village pedagogue. It is a painful evidence of “*total depravity*,” too, to notice how naturally Freshmen fall into this disgraceful habit. Everybody knows with what difficulty a “gentleman who has recently entered College” makes his initiatory harangue in the society which is blessed with his presence. In order to bring forth a speech, the Freshman’s brain oftentimes has to be belabored more than Balaam’s Ass was to produce the same result: yet the chances are that he will in the very first sentence make a gigantic effort to get off a *pun*.

Now this state of things must be deplored by every right-minded man: and in the hope of averting these horrible evils in some slight degree, we write this hortation. And, O, enterprising individual! if you acknowledge the bonds of a common humanity,—if you know the “vally o’ peace and quiet,”—if you have any respect for your fellow mortals—then, in the name of all that is commendable in words, and all that is seemly in language, do not once again, during your natural life, inflict upon unoffending ears a single pun. It is true there may be a good pun, and so it is within the range of human possibility that there may be a good hand-organ, or a sweet-toned hurdy-gurdy: but all three are so abominably common and so universally wretched, that even one which is good of its kind neither attracts any great attention for itself, nor gains any great honor for the “grinder.”

But if you have no regard for others, you surely cannot be forgetful of yourself. Do not, then, waste the divine energies of your mind in conjuring up quips and quirks. If you require so much intellectual exercise, study Balbus or the Catechism. If you wish to cultivate your imagination, read the story of Sindbad. If you wish to laugh, do it decently, as a Christian gentleman should. If you are of a

jovial disposition, *be so*, and be thankful. But if you have a tendency to make puns, betake yourself to sackcloth and ashes: or if this will not do, dissipate; smoke bad cigars; squander your estate; become a reprobate and a Colloquy man, if need be, but at whatever sacrifice, refrain from *punning*.

N. C. P.

Jonas Jones.

A most extraordinary and curious Ballad found in the archives of old South Middle.

Good people all, both young and old,
Come listen to my tale,
Of Jonas Jones, a Freshman bold,
Who entered Mother Yale.

A youth he was of goodly mien,
As any in the town,
Who, though he entered very green,
Was quickly done up brown.

For walking in the street one day,
He spied a ladye love,
In such array she seemed a ray
Of beauty from above.

And, stricken to the very heart,
This Freshman found he was
Not smart enough to heal the smart
From such a deadly cause.

He straightway then did much desire
To know the lady's name,
And, since his heart was all on fire,
To have her for his "flame."

To him she seemed at least a queen,
Or princess in disguise,
For in her mien was nothing mean,
And proudly glanced her eyes.

He questioned long, but none could tell
Where dwelt this lady fair,
Some, for a sell, said, "In a cell
She lives, and feeds on air."

At last he found her real abode,
('Twas not in monkish cloisters,)
But in Fair Haven, near Shell Road,
She dwelt and OPENED OYSTERS.

It hurt his pride that he had pry'd
So long for such a girl,
"For ah!" he sadly said and sighed,
"Such oysters yield no pearl."

THE DE FOREST PRIZE ORATION.

The Influence of the Joys and Sorrows of a Great Soul
in its own Development.

BY PHINEAS WOLCOTT CALKINS, CORNING, N. Y.

A R G U M E N T.

Two propositions to be established:—

First, that a period of intense suffering is necessary to counteract the growth of a weak and false character.

Second, that such a period is always followed by peculiar joys and subdued sorrows which have a direct influence in developing a truly great character.

I. Two classes of influences to make the character weak and false: the first are received from without, and impel the mind to adopt other methods of thinking than its own; the second from within, and impel the mind to substitute general for specific conceptions, and the heart to trust speculative instead of active moral principles.

Suffering is necessary to counteract both classes. Proof: first, the facts; second, the process traced out as follows:—

Suffering at once drives men into solitude; then awakens the consciousness to truths which cannot be conceived of by external systems of thinking; thus counteracting the first class of false influences.

Neither can these truths be conceived of, or investigated, by any internal habits of thinking which are general and abstract. By the same process fully carried out, all speculative moral principles are found, by a severe *moral experiment*, to be powerless. Thus all the influences that tend to make the character weak and false are counteracted.

II. These intense struggles are then followed by the peculiar joys and subdued sorrows which tend directly to develop the truly great character.

First, by *Faith*. Not merely a religious but also a philosophical element of a great soul.

The joys that flow from faith. First, *Spiritual rest*; its nature and influence.

Second, and the highest joy of which any moral being is capable, *Spiritual freedom*; its nature and influence. Necessity of habitual melancholy to subdue this joy.

Finally, the crowning element of character imparted by these sufferings and joys, a *sense of personal responsibility* to put the *original energies* of the mind in action.

O R A T I O N.

THE sufferings and joys of a great soul are necessary and efficient influences in its own development. A period of intense suffering can alone counteract the growth of a weak and false character. And the peculiar joys and subdued sorrows which follow such a period are direct and lasting influences to give purity and fortitude to a truly great character.

The Great Soul is surrounded with influences that tend to make it weak and false. They are imparted by every system of mental culture, by literature, and even by the discipline of life, if all its difficulties are successfully encountered. For these all satisfy the mind with methods of thinking that are made to appear more brilliant than its own methods. And the voice of vanity and flattery is never wanting to whisper to men of great ability that they do succeed better than other men in these old formulas of thinking. But what success was it for Luther to be lecturing about the monkish theology of his times, or for St. Paul to be torturing his great soul into feverish activity in doing all sorts of "God-service" in support of an imbecile system of faith, already in its dotage? The Great Soul has a work of its own to do, and if it do not break the thralldom of external systems of thinking, it can never grow to the strength of actual greatness.

But there are influences from within that are more insinuating than these. There is a tendency in a mind of philosophic curiosity and habitual thoughtfulness to substitute abstract and general conceptions, which are essentially superficial, for a warm appreciation of truth in its specific relations, which makes it a formative power in character, and an element of strength in action. This habit is still more dangerous when applied to the moral elements of greatness. For it substitutes speculative principles for active principles: the creed that sharpens the spirit of controversy, for the faith that inspires the life; the general sense of responsibility that makes loud talkers, for the sense of individual responsibility that makes fervent actors. But mere speculation about truths that ought to determine the action, and about destinies that ought to guide the life, is a sickening evidence that the Great Soul has never sunk down into its own depth and sincerity, too sincere then for boasting, too deep for consciousness itself.

Now we have the unvarying testimony of facts and of the laws of moral necessity, that these superficial and false influences can only be

counteracted by a period of intense suffering. By severe and judicious training, this is experienced by some in early life. But we are not without illustrious examples of men like John Knox, who have lived half their lives like other men, before receiving this first impulse in the career of greatness. In some, a natural obduracy of disposition against yielding to the influence of suffering, prolongs the necessary period of its duration. In others, a keen excitability and moral sensitiveness add greatly to its intensity. But there is in all Great Souls the calm and unimpressive, as well as the sensitive, the Washingtons as well as the Cromwells, a habit of self-scrutiny, which makes the oppressive responsibilities of life, and outward afflictions, and more than these, its own consciousness of imperfections and impurities, the occasion of inward struggles that sober their smiles always, and sink at times to a depth of misery that few can appreciate. In short, accidents and differences of temperament may modify the period and duration, and degree of suffering, but do not obviate its necessity nor affect the moral purposes it serves. All great characters need energies too deep for the voice of joy to awaken, and spiritual fortitude that prosperity cannot test.

For suffering is necessary, in the first place, to drive them into solitude, where they are protected from the intrusion of flattery and fashions, by the beautiful tribute that is always paid to real grief; and from the still more dangerous intrusion of the memory of these, by the solemnity that sits darkly at every avenue to the mind. Then, in the dread empire of silence, suffering gives such depth and terrible earnestness to the emotions and efforts of the soul, that it becomes conscious, for the first time, of a whole world of facts that are removed at an infinite distance from the sphere of books and external laws. By this it is put in possession of energies so profound, and of truths so sacredly and unutterably its own, that it feels no disposition to return again to the outer semblances of things, that seem in comparison so superficial and so false. It was this first influence of a deep, inward sorrow, that drove Luther out of the miserable dogmatism of his times, and forced him to find a way to think his own thoughts, and put forth his own strength.

It is also the prerogative of this awakening to the transcendent value of the truths of the inner world, to counteract the false influences received from within. No general and abstract conceptions can be applied to such truths as these. The intellect is forced to conceive of them clearly, to investigate them thoroughly, and to apply them with

precision to the specific acts of every day life. Narrow prejudices are broken up, and the mind is thrown open to receive the mysteries of life, in whatever shape they present themselves. There is sublimity in the reply of the great suffering Hamlet, to the incredulous matter-of-fact Horatio, when he shrank from the voice that came up from the inward depths, merely because it was "strange,"

"And *therefore*, as a stranger, give it *welcome* !"

Oh, if the great soul would always give a stranger's welcome to the questionings that throng round it in affliction: to the desolations of a hope cherished and blighted, to the misgivings of a remembered duty unperformed, to the self-reproaches that look darkly back from unkindness and wrong, nay, even to the doubts that beat so dismally at the inner sanctuary of faith, until memory and consciousness are crowded with ghostly images of despair and remorse; how soon would all of these, when once received into the presence chamber of the still and solemn reason, be swayed by its sovereignty, and work together loyally to solve its perplexities and swell its triumphs!

For this thorough work of suffering counteracts, also, the influences that are so fatal to the moral elements of greatness. It is effectual in this, because it drives the soul into a *moral experiment with itself*, by which it tests completely the weakness and falsehood of its speculative principles. Common minds might reach this conclusion by argument. But there is an obduracy in the Great Soul against yielding its own opinions, for which we cannot altogether conceal our admiration, and which is meant to serve a sublime purpose in its discipline. But it yields at last. This self-reliance which philosophy has fortified with all the forces of abstract reasoning, quails before a stern sorrow that rises up within the citadel of the soul itself. The belief that has never sank deeper than controversial speculation, is found to be no belief at all when these playthings of an idle hour are swept away by an emotion that is awfully real, and the conscience is left alone to turn over the leaves of memory and dig deeper the channels of consciousness, and open clearer the consequences of moral action! This is the rational philosophy of the spiritual struggles of the great. They are desperate efforts to apply the superficial knowledge of observation and inference, to the profound experiences of the soul. They are struggles with nothing but miserable weakness and error, but with weakness and error, that, but for these struggles, would have been trusted for ever as strength and virtue; yet, when once overcome, react with inconceivable power, to give intensity to the intellect and sincerity to the heart.

It cannot be denied, however, that there are fearful perils connected with a moral experiment of such severity and inevitable disappointment. The great Poet of meditation has foreseen this :*—

. " the soul
Turns inward to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed ; and life
Is put to inquisition long and profitless.
By pain of heart now checked, and now impelled,
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Goes sounding on, *a dim and perilous way !*"

Dim and perilous, indeed ! To those who walk, not in sincerity of heart, abounding with all manner of sourness and petulance to the disposition, and leading at last to a sickly sentimentalism that makes a luxury and a parade of grief in driveling conversations and spasmodic literature. To those who have not strength of mind to endure its lashing discipline to the bitter end, but arrest it when half completed, when they know just enough to begin to distrust their former principles, but not enough to trust higher principles, a way that ends in the monstrously unnatural chaos of scepticism and morbid melancholy. But the effect of grief upon the Great Soul is to expand its strength, not to break it ; to deepen its sincerity, not to destroy it. The Great Soul grows stronger through suffering, so that it can bury in its own silence all its agonies, while they reveal nothing but darkness and wrong, and hold itself resolutely to this appalling experiment, until all its revelations are bitterly ended. And all this time it is growing more and more sincere to itself, so that it can cease to trust what it has believed to be virtue, when it is found to be sin, and can cease to torment itself into a sense of responsibility, that is found to be visionary. Now it is morally impossible for the Great Soul to be ruined by such a discipline. The resolute silence, and deep thoughtfulness and tender docility it maintains, as the tragedy of sorrow sweeps on relentlessly, severing passion after passion that was most potent, confidence after confidence that was surest, and hope after hope that was sweetest, is a cheering evidence that this is an experiencing of sad necessity, indeed, and wild disappointment, but of sublimest promise !

For although its own work is merely to counteract the growth of a weak and false character, yet it leads naturally, and in the end gives place to influences that have a direct and enduring tendency to develop the strong and sincere and truly great character. Of these direct influences, the joys of the Great Soul constitute a large element, while sor-

* The Excursion, Despondency.

row, if it still retains its place, is in the subdued form of rational melancholy.

The first experience to succeed the struggles of the Great Soul, is a living and enduring *faith*. An experience which arrests the ordinary current of thinking, and exhausts the principles of moral action, prompts the vigorous intellect to conceive and the ingenuous heart to trust a power more stable than self, the unchanging Power to which man has never been altogether blinded. We may infer, therefore, from this process of thinking and volition, the characteristics of the object that receives the belief and trust of the Great Soul. It must be a spiritual being, as the very first impulse of grief is to create dissatisfaction with the world of sense; and it must be removed at an infinite distance in energy and integrity from the poor spirit within itself, that is lying in helpless defeat; but with all these spiritual and infinite attributes to satisfy a soul that has been struggling so desperately with shadows and deceptions, it must be an unquestioned reality; not a conception nor an idea, but the Eternal I AM, that can be shaken by no calculation of chances, by no revulsion of feeling; above all, it must be the Soul's own deepest reality:—the moving power of every judgment that is formed, of every feeling that throbs, and the linking sympathy with every thing that is living and beautiful in nature and humanity!

In accordance with this inference, we find in fact, that every truly great man on earth, has been possessed of such a faith as this. He may have mingled it with strange superstition and fatalism, and fanaticism. But faith is not more a religious than a philosophical element of the Great Soul. And the word of God, which has removed religious errors, has worked no change in the philosophy of the mind. Faith, whether it be called "*Δαίμων*,"* or "Destiny,"† or the "Inner voice of God,"‡ or "Communion with the Author and Redeemer of our moral nature,"§ faith, I repeat, has ever been, and shall for ever be to the great man, the moving power of his mightiest energies, and the inspirer of his holiest purposes.

What we are ever to remember, then, in our estimation of great men, is that the most radical and powerful element of their greatness, can flow only from an experience of deep suffering. There is a kind of faith imparted to those who do not rise above a life of impulse, through the prejudices of childhood and the fascination of a sect or a national creed. And some calculating minds can, I suppose, work themselves into a sort of prudential faith by a mathematical adjustment

* Socrates. † Napoleon. ‡ Cromwell. § The true Christian Hero.

between the arguments of apologists and those of sceptics. But is it even conceivable that a faith which lifts the commonest action of life above all considerations of prudence, and guides every impulse of the heart by the unimpassioned reason, and sometimes nerves the soul to the heroic living of Luther, and the martyr-dying of Socrates can flow from tradition or calculation? There is One that tells us, "this kind cometh of tribulation and sorrow!"

Yet these are the fountains of all the peculiar joys of the Great Soul; of all those joys, I mean, which are distinguished in kind, and not alone in degree. The beautiful act of humility which receives the testimony of the wearied spirit to its own incompetency, and resolves to trust a higher Power, is followed by the sweet eventide of the soul, *Spiritual rest*. This is a joy that has a power in it too; for it gathers up the energies that have been distracted by one absorbing emotion, and imparts to the character that symmetry and repose and unconscious dignity, which together constitute its most graceful charm, and are a source of hallowed power.

Then follows the most elevated and efficient joy of the Great Soul—*Spiritual freedom*. The maxim that the joy and power of freedom is only appreciated after an experience of thralldom, is truest of spiritual freedom. We talk metaphysically of the freedom of the human will, yet who of us is actually free? What action or purpose is free from the memory of resolutions forgotten or willfully broken, from the consciousness of vacillating impulses and impure motives, and even from the foreboding of moral ruin. Now while we are bitterly conscious of this servitude, let us conceive, if we can, the freedom given to the Great Soul by a *trust* so perfect that it implies peace with the past, and so present and real that consciousness of it alone, swallows up all consciousness of the weak and impure promptings of nature, and so assured that the terror of the future is lost in its radiant promises of excellence; do we now find any mystery in the intellectual freedom that "breathes and burns" in the speeches of Demosthenes, in the heroic fearlessness of those brief ragged words and swift executions of Cromwell, in the steady hand and angel smile when the hemlock was swallowed, in the spiritual triumphs that caught the greatest of the Apostles into the "third heaven to hear unspeakable words!"

Yet at this glorious period in the growth of a Great Soul, when the struggles of the past mingle only forgiven memories with the joys of the present, and thus inspire the true rapture of life, which a man of deep experience has said,* "can arise only as the rapture of music, by the

* De Quincey—*Suspiria de profundis*.

confluence of the mighty and terrific discords with the subtle concords," even here alas! the soul is obnoxious to an insidious and fatal moral danger—the danger of *Spiritual exultation*. If the experience of profound emotion has often begotten a narrow spirit of exclusiveness and depreciation, if the genial nature and flowing songs of Burns could subdue every calamity and sorrow, but could not avert the peril of their own triumph, if the most splendid achievements of modern arms could destroy Napoleon's fidelity to his best purposes, how much more perilous are the triumphs of greater men than these, who crown heroic action and graceful intellect and profound emotion, with harder-wrought victory over themselves! Well may they tremble in the flush of such a moral triumph, "lest they be exalted above measure." For many a Moses has had to get him up to the mountain top of his experience, and close his dying eye on the golden fruitions of all his trials, because of one daring effort to trust his own weakness in place of the divine source of all his power!

To lead the Great Soul through this danger in unshaken simplicity and faith, the same power is needed, as to impart these elements of character in the beginning:—"the power and divinity of suffering." Not, however, the intense agony of those early struggles, but the subdued sorrow that readily induces in the chastened spirit renewed self-scrutiny. And as this danger is ever present to the Great Soul, there is a rational melancholy which must be its habitual mood. The upper realms of character lie for ever in an atmosphere of sorrow!

And now if we cannot withhold our veneration for a faith and freedom so philosophical in their origin and development, and so sublime in their power, there is another element of greatness flowing from the same "troubled waters" of the soul, and purified by the same elevated joys and subdued sorrows, which must command our fervent gratitude:—it is the sense of *personal responsibility* to put all these powers in action for our good. This is the life-giving element of all greatness in action, No man will put his whole soul into a work which he feels a thousand other men can do as well as he. But if any man will read himself with resolute sincerity, he will find some power which other men have not, to do some work they cannot do. This discovery is inconceivably impressive when the most agonizing efforts to crush the spirit into the measure of other men, the intellect into their vague generalities, and the conscience into their speculative creeds, has ended in painful but glorious defeat, preparing the way for a vivid conception and a rational possession of the original, true, and resistless energies of the deepest spirit. For the very fact that they are sacredly and untransferably

its own, stirs in the Great Soul a motive to action that is free from selfish vanity, and sacredly personal. And that motive, dawning on the Soul in its darkest hour, gathering strength from every impulse subdued, from every false principle rejected, at last when despondency gives place to unfaltering trust and rapturous freedom, will assuredly break forth in generous and heroic achievement.

Letter from a Tobacco-Smoker.

Gentlemen of the Yale Literary Magazine :

I BELONG to that much abused class of persons known as tobacco smokers. Even within a few weeks, I have met with such sharp lectures from my minister, and such cross looks from my landlady,—I am considered by them such a traitor to decency, morality, and the best interests of my fellow men, that in some moments of desperation I have almost fancied myself an incipient Ephialtes, a masculine Tarpeia, a possible Arnold or Pierce.

Last Saturday night, as I was reflecting upon the subject over my meerschaum, I came to the conclusion that I had no hope of refuge save in emigration, suicide, or an appeal to the justice of my countrymen. But inasmuch as the George Law does not start for the “diggins” until the last of next month, and it is rather too dusty to be killed upon the Camden and Amboy Railroad, at this season of the year, my only salvation is in writing you this remonstrance. At the same time, I am aware that what with the squeamish noses of one part of the community, and the tender consciences of another, I stand no more chance of success than a “short-tailed whale in a Norway whirlpool.”

In order, gentlemen, to show you my extreme candor, I will admit that there are times when I consider it inexpedient, I may say improper, to indulge in the practice of smoking: e. g. just before or during the hours of eating, drinking, kissing, sleeping, and (which is the same thing) of preaching. But you will remember that the *Truth* is not to be spoken at all times. And the same restriction may be applied to

the mastication of that invaluable bulb—the onion. But what then? Must we renounce truth? Are onions to be no more esculent forever? No, indeed. Speak the truth whenever it may accord with your interests. Eat onions when you cannot obtain the luxury of kisses. And in like manner whiff the glorious leaf divine whenever any one will stand treat.

Turning now to the extreme unfairness of my adversaries, let me allude to their ungenerous practice of nicknaming my favorite narcotic.

They never speak of it as the “true hearts-ease,” the “Elysian lotus,” or “flower of Arcady.” No. They sneer at it, and call it the “*weed*.” Mark the quintessence of their contempt. Not *a* weed, but *the* weed, *id est* the concentrated ugliness and venom of all weeds. But, gentlemen, you are as well-read as any of your writings. You are historic characters. Allow me to remind you how those good old Puritans were stigmatized as roundheads, and those good old Wesleyans as Methodists. But now they glory in their nicknames. And so shall it be with our sons and daughters in the good time coming, when in porch and parlor they shall inhale the perfume of “that weed of glorious feature,” fashioned into the likeness of Operas and Regalias, of Havanas and Colorados, of Jenny Linds and all sweet singers, of Washingtons and all true patriots.

Some illogical quacks have undertaken to show that smoking is injurious to the human system, because, forsooth, when given in the form of an essential oil, to a kitten, it produces very deleterious effects.

Now, as I do not like kittens, and am rather fond of the fiddling extracted from their entrails, this objection appears to me to have but little weight. Moreover, there may possibly be some difference between the organization of the human race and that of the juvenile feline.

The quack argument is this: a given substance kills a given creature, therefore a very different substance will kill a very different creature. Suppose that kittens were angels, does it follow therefore that we tobacco-smokers are angels? If we are, all that we contend for is granted. If we are not, the argument will not apply. And, in the second place, because tobacco-oil is injurious, it does not follow that the same is true of tobacco-smoke. They might as well tell us that it is the same thing to take iron in the shape of a tonic from the doctor, and in the shape of a rifle bullet from a border ruffian. Bah! We don't know what effect their tobacco might have, but their logic is enough to make a cat sick through all her nine-fold nature.

Another unfair device of the anti-tobacconists, is their classing together smoking and other practices, which are acknowledged abominations. E. G.—It is said that a loafer is known by the three characteristics of wearing stand-up shirt-collars, swearing, and smoking cigars. Again, Dr. Adam Clarke, in very unpleasant language, remarks, that if he were to sacrifice to his Satanic majesty, the offering should consist of rum, pork and tobacco.

But these bogus imitations of old Welsh triads, I consider as miserable personalities. There is no accounting for tastes. “Chacun à son gout,” “De gustibus,” &c. One man does not like musk. Another detests cheese. I, myself, experience a reversal of the peristaltic motion at the sight of clams. But is musk, therefore, to be tabooed? Are Goshen and Chelsea to be hooted to the destination of equestrian beggars?

These old saws contain *prima facie* evidence of their falsity in their rhetorical structure. For it is an established canon of criticism, (see the various critiques upon Mr. Macaulay,) that the exhibition of point implies the non-existence of truth. To borrow an illustration from gunnery, it is firing point-blank. With quite as much propriety, I might string together a loafer, the devil, and Dr. Clarke, into a Geryonic monster, without considering the gross injustice done to the two gentlemen last mentioned.

I stand up for the Union. The Union is in danger. Arguments against the use of tobacco are of a sectional nature. It has happened, in the course of my travels, that I have often met with localities in which smoking and living were synonymous terms. To use the figurative language of oriental climes: The mosquitoes were strong as the roc of Sinbad, and numerous as the fleas which carried Mahomet across the Bosphorus. Marshal Tukey could not catch them. Mudgekeewis could not smash them. Proteus could not elude them. The only phylactery of the poor “æstro percitus,” is in a sure meerschaum, or a prime cigar. Then, with the aid of brass lungs and a calm sky, one may be as successful in conflict with the Harpies as the royal wizard of England, with his enchanted smoke, “ad daemones abigendos.”

Tobacco-smoking, gentlemen, is of great potency to quicken the intellectual functions, “Ex fumo dare lucem,” as Horatius saith. As the wonders of the concave mirror are most wonderful when exhibited in a fumigated atmosphere, even so does the mind require the same subtle medium as a condition of its “speciosa miracula.” Hence we see at

once the reason why metaphysicians, and particularly the Germans, consider the aromatic cloud as a sublime necessity of their mental organization. We spy the baffled secret of Raleigh's heroism and Hall's eloquence. We see why even the temperate Milton lit his vesper pipe ere he lay down to dream of *Paradise lost*. We cease to wonder at Tennyson's black pipe-bowl, "girdled with the gleaming world" of song. Hobbes, of Malmsbury, was of our belief. He used to sit down to his cogitations with a whole dozen of pipe-clay, and smoke them all through before he could come to a logical conclusion. Therefore we agree with our friend Sandy, in Alton Locke, that "smoking promotes thinking, and driveth awa' the lusts o' the flesh."

My friend Josephus alledges that smoking is very extravagant. Money enough, says he, is spent in this foolish practice every year, to feed the poor in all our cities, and, in a short time, to provide the means for instructing and christianizing every inhabitant of the globe. This may be all true, though we have our doubts upon the subject. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished. But why pitch so indefatigably into the smokers? Why not, O Josephus, cast the beam out of thine own eye? Why not wage war also against the extravagances of roast beef and Shanghai coat-tails? Everybody knows that shin-bones are twice as nutritious as sirloins, and three times as cheap. Now let us suppose that the average amount of beef consumed daily in the United States is half a pound for each individual. Take the inhabitants of our country, as numbering thirty millions. Deduct five millions for the non-meat-eating negroes of the South, and we have a remainder of twenty-five millions carnivora.

Take the cost of sirloin as fifteen cents per pound, and the cost of shin-bones, as four cents per pound. The superior nutritive qualities of the latter will bring down the real cost to two cents. Bring forth the logarithms, and we shall find that the difference between imitating John Bull's Christmas dinner, and living on more correct physiological principles, amounts to \$1,500,000.00, an annual sum more than sufficient to carry out the benevolent wishes of Josephus, and leave a handsome surplus at the disposal of the Society for the whitewashing and gilding of Ethiopians.

Finally, gentlemen, let us talk about the poetry of smoking. If, as some critics assert, there is poetry in horses, inasmuch as they shy; and in dogs, inasmuch as they whine in their sleep, thus showing that they have in them somewhat that is spiritual, what shall we say of the glo-

rious imaginings that are concentrated in the pipe-bowl? The ancients had some faint idea thereof, when they fashioned that wondrous bowl of gold in which the King of day journeyed to the Hesperides. The red men of this Continent perceived the poetic presence, when they made the calumet the token of peace and signal for rejoicing. But it was reserved for later times, and a son of Yale, to catch the full inspiration of his immortal theme, and to discern in the starry light of the burning leaf, emblems of love and incentives to glory. *Loquitur*, Franklin Finch:

“It warms the soul like the blushing bowl,
With its rose-red burden, streaming,
And drowns it in bliss, like the first warm kiss
From the lips with love-buds teeming.”

These ideas, though “ne’er so well expressed,” were often thought before. Every one has felt them that ever sat beneath the moonlighted foliage of our guardian-elms, with a group of kindred spirits, watching the smoke-wreaths rising in their beauty, like Aphrodite from the meerschäum—the sea-foam, till the day’s cares and vexations seemed as light as they, and all hearts were knit together by the viewless bond of smiles and genial jokes, till the very stars seemed to twinkle with gladness, and the green leaves above us to dance to the music of our songs. Verily, Anthony Van Corlear’s was the most poetical of lives, and Wouter Van Twiller’s the most poetical of deaths, and Anacreon Moore, when he sang of smoking as “music seen and tasted,” was of all poets the most philosophical.

But, gentlemen, my pipe is out, and my wits are in consequence bearing them company, and so I will conclude with an apothegm of the greatest of modern sages:

“*Gloria mundi fumus est.*”

Yours to command,

E. G. DARAPTI.

TOWNSEND PRIZE ESSAY.

The Character and Tendency of English Style.

BY LEWIS R. PACKARD, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

“The language, free and bold,
Which the bard of Avon sung,
In which our Milton told
How the vault of Heaven rung,
When Satan, blasted, fell with all his host.”

W. ALLSTON.

STYLE is inseparably connected with thought. The outlines of a statue, or the colors of a painting, may excite our admiration, while we are yet ignorant or careless of the ideas embodied in them. But in printed letters, the eye sees no beauty. Unmeaning sounds, however eloquently spoken, cannot charm the ear. From words, the mind passes at once to the thought they express. Style is dead and senseless if we regard not the thought in it. Language furnishes the skeleton of literature; Style clothes it with a body; but Thought is the soul that beams through the eye, makes beautiful the countenance, and governs the whole man. Hence, in the study of English style, is included the study of the *thought* of the English people, as embodied in their literature, and resulting from their character.

There are, however, certain qualities of style dependent upon the materials with which it works. From language it derives its materials. By variously combining phrases and applying figures, it produces those magic effects of power or pathos, which are limited only by the strength and capacity of the language. What, therefore, it is possible for English style to attain, and what verbal peculiarities belong to it, may be learned from a glance at the English language.

It is, in its origin and nature, a composite language. The noble old Saxon,—had it no other merit, it were sufficient glory to contain these noble “English words, Faith, Freedom, Heaven, and Home,”—this grand old Saxon has received many additions from Germany, Scandinavia, France, and the classic literature of ancient Greece and Rome. The stern and vigorous mind of northern Europe, the vivid imagination and warm feeling of the vine-clad south, the ethereal glory of Grecian intellect, the stately pomp and philosophic accuracy of the Latin tongue—all have furnished of their abundance, to strengthen and adorn the sim-

ple, yet powerful, Saxon words. The richness, and the varied excellencies of these different languages, are the materials out of which our English style is constructed. From these, it derives that infinite variety and that capability of intense energy, which are its prominent characteristics.

Another of its peculiarities is a frequent use of idioms, which adds much life and piquancy to the style, especially in familiar compositions. This is owing to the idiomatic structure of the language, for which the circumstances of its growth may account. It is the product of the daily life and necessities of a people, remarkable for independence and activity of thought, for always looking beyond the means to the end, and for expressing the ideal in metaphors from the material world. Thus, forming continually new ideas, and adapting phrases to convey them; disregarding formal rules of grammar, and set meanings of words in a simple eagerness to throw out the thought, abounding in concise and appropriate metaphors, the English nation has wrought out a language and a style full of idiomatic beauty and energy.

The prominent traits of English character are familiar to us all. We learn them from their history; we trace them in their literature, we know them in the living nation, we see them among ourselves.

The Anglo-Saxon race is everywhere a freedom-loving race. Popular interests and popular government are always defended and upheld by it.

A prevailing love of the practical and the useful, is another characteristic trait of the race. "*Cui bono?*" is not, with them, the question of an age, or an individual mind, but a permanent and universal test of excellence. From these traits of character, naturally result certain corresponding characteristics of thought in English literature of the present day. Of these we find, first, what we will call a popular element.

We find this popular element manifesting itself in a constant recognition of the ideas and feelings of the people, as true and right. We detect it in a half unconscious reference to the people, as the proper and ultimate audience to be addressed by every thinker. We trace this influence of the people, powerfully acting in a literature which directly defends their rights; which advocates a form of government securing those rights; which claims to express their feelings, and finds its highest honor in their affection.

It is not singular or unnatural that literature is thus of the people. Science, no longer the amusement of the few, is now the servant of the

many ; once confined to the greatest minds, it is now open to the understanding of a child. Government now acknowledges as its noblest object, the good of the masses. Christianity has always made its home among the people. As a religion of liberty, of simplicity, and of spirituality, it is in its nature popular. Thus Literature shares with its divine sisters, this popular element which gives them rank among the dearest possessions of mankind.

It is an element of the inmost nature of modern literature. The readers of modern times are the people of all classes. Books have become an ornament in every parlor, and a necessity in every house. Books have become the companions, the friends, of all men ; they are now a part of our social life. They occupy our thoughts, they guide our conversations, they mould our characters, and they do it all freely and unconsciously, in a social, popular way. Therefore any work, to obtain a place in the literature of a nation, while it need not foster the vices, or pander to the passions, must, nevertheless, engage the attention, and affect the character, of the people.

In every free literature, more especially under a republican government, there is a strong tendency to an ornate and oratorical style. It has been said that a Republic is but an aristocracy of orators. And it is indeed only natural and necessary that all literature should tend to that style which will most influence the people, when influence over the people is the surest road to success and power. The masses are pleased and moved most readily by the presentation of thought under the clothing of grace and beauty. Ornaments, either of elegance or of energy, always delight them.

The excess of this, gives to the style an over-wrought and declamatory tone, passing, sometimes, into mere bombast, offending, always, against purity and simplicity. Against this abuse of ornament, let common sense and good taste enter their indignant protest. An ornate style is no blemish, but a decided excellence in modern literature ; this extravagant burlesque upon it, is a disgrace and an insult to the thought of the age.

We have found *practicality* to be a prominent element in the English character. We naturally find in English literature, a quality corresponding to this. No agency can be left unemployed by this genius of universal activity. Literature must bear its share of hot and dusty toil in the great labor of the age, and do its part in the real and tangible advancement of mankind. 'Even its lighter departments, which might

hope to be excused from the coarse and rough realities of life, must show that they are accomplishing somewhat for the general good, before stern Saxon common-sense will approve them. Dickens, Thackeray and Kingsley, owe their eminent positions as novelists, in no small degree, to the fact that they hold before their eyes in every work, the accomplishment of some practical, positive change in public sentiment, as their ultimate object.

The stern necessities of the age, act with the national tendency, to infuse a practical spirit into English literature. Those great social problems, which have been the threatening Sphinxes of all past generations, now challenge us to a fearful contest, which must banish from literature all aimless mirth, all fruitless passion. Practical, indeed, and powerful, must that literature be which embodies the character of the race, and meets the demands of the age.

Style has also felt the influence of this practical disposition. It produces a certain straightforward energy, and directness of action, which does not, indeed, forbid ornament, but which makes everything contribute to the final object it has in view. Elegance of expression is not despised; an occasional episode is not condemned; for both may aid the general design; but through all varieties of form we see the same steady progress, and unvarying direction towards the ultimate end of the whole.

The predominance which intellect is beginning to assume over feeling in literature, may also be traced to this spirit of practicality. It cannot always see the use and power of feeling. It demands dry argument and naked fact. Whenever, therefore, excitement of feeling is deemed necessary, it comes in an artificial form, and with forced warmth. This exclusion of natural fervor is an evil, for which all the benefits arising from energy and directness can hardly compensate.

A passion for philosophy, a desire to reduce all things to a few fundamental principles, is a prevailing characteristic of modern thought. All learning must be classified. Every party and system must state a new theory as its basis. The wide results of thought and observation must be condensed into a few words of abstract truth, or they will never be heard or known.

Every department of literature has changed, somewhat, its character under the influence of this new feeling. History is now no longer a record of facts, a story of national life, but an analysis of national character, and an estimate of the action of principles in the world's progress. Poetry has sobered her laughing face, and calmed her excited feeling.

She appears now, as in the sacred strains of *In Memoriam* and the *Excursion*, in the quiet dignity of sage philosophy. Even Fiction wears upon her fairy brow a look of keen penetration and of high purpose, which marks a change in her character. She lives now for nobler ends than to amuse the young, or occupy the idle. To condemn an abuse, to establish a principle, to defend an injured class, are now her cheerful duties.

Our age is one of thoughtful and speculative literature. If we hold the theory of alternate creative and reflective periods in literature, we are now in a period of reflection, the reaction from that rich outgrowth of imagination which followed the American and French revolutions.

Or, if this theory be too purely theoretical to be readily assumed, we may find more immediate and palpable causes of this philosophic character. The German mind, with its profound and thoughtful tone, has had a powerful influence on English writers in both the graver and the lighter departments of literature. Important discoveries in science, critical experiments in government, and momentous events of history have all combined, in the present century, to impart a deep and earnest philosophy to thought.

The language of metaphysical thought has been incorporated into the language of common English literature, and is rapidly modifying its style. It is, indeed, imparting a comprehensiveness, and a facility of analysis, by its abstract terms. But through these same abstract terms, there has come over the style of the day, a vagueness which seems almost to counteract all the practical tendencies of the Anglo-Saxon race, and the nineteenth century. Such wild obscurity may be the normal product of the German mind, acting through the German language; but it is hardly suitable to the practical English character, or at home in the clear and vigorous English language. This vagueness belongs peculiarly to metaphysical literature, as, indeed, might be expected; but its influence is now beginning to be felt, and its presence detected, in essays upon æsthetics and philosophy generally, in criticisms of art, and very decidedly in philosophical poetry. Over all these speculations rests a cloud of vague metaphysics, gorgeous, indeed, at times, in the golden light of genius, but in substance, only mist and vapor.

Three characteristics of English style have now been noticed; oratorical ornament, practical intellect, and a tendency to philosophic vagueness.

If such is the character of English style in the present, what will it be

in the future? what are its tendencies? Light and hope beam from the opening prospect before us. External circumstances, and internal tendencies, both promise a future of continual improvement.

Christianity, acting upon the individual, and upon society, can never cease to elevate literature. It will give to every man an intensity of noble purpose. It presents to all, unequaled models, both of style and character. With it free government, favoring in many ways the progress of literature, shall gather strength and enlarge its sway continually. Civilization and Commerce, refining agents of life and literature always, shall follow round the globe the swift-rolling sun, ever multiplying and scattering wide the rich blessings they bring. While thus external circumstances favor a future improvement of style, its internal qualities show no downward tendency. The effect of their mutual action is to eliminate their errors, to cultivate and improve their excellencies.

Affluence of ornament is an excellence which will advance with the progress of free government. But the tendency to declamation is constantly checked by the growing influence of practical ideas, and corrected by the increase of cultivation and good taste.

And while the philosophic character of thought, with its earnestness and lofty purpose be retained, the vague mists of language in which it is now shrouded, will be driven off by the practical energy of the age. Or, perhaps, the light of extending knowledge will penetrate and reveal their darkest depths. Thus these faults and errors will fade away and be forgotten. The graceful ornament, the philosophic spirit, and the practical vigor of English style, shall ever endure, immortal monuments of Anglo-Saxon character.

“The Niger and its Banks.”

NOTWITHSTANDING the recent discoveries in Africa, which have almost revealed a new continent, it will be difficult to invest anything associated therewith with readable interest. Our early estimation of the country and natives formed from the School Geography, have not been much improved by subsequent observations upon the species around us. In a spirited engraving accompanying the above mentioned authority, Africa was represented under the figure of an individual of very decided color, in costume consistent with the climate, and leaning on an elephant's

tusk, while the more prominent national characteristics, as wools, heels, et cetera, were most advantageously set forth. In the background was a boundless desert with a solitary palm. And we thought of a land where the sun's rays, unscattered by green hill-sides and untempered by springy valleys, fell vertically on glistening, silent sands, of great monsters wallowing in the slime of stagnant lakes—of panting tigers stretched in the shade of forrest canopies, and huge serpents coiled in the thickets. And in all times the interior of Africa has been a field for wonder and imagination.

Lined by continuous swamps which imprison like a dungeon wall a poisonous malaria, or fenced in by fiery deserts, men imagined much of what they knew so little, and said surely such flaming barriers must guard another Eden.

And yet Africa has seldom been selected as the scene of poetry and romance. The Muses of song and story have not chosen it for a local habitation, even though led thither by the gentle Moravian bard. Dr. Johnson has indeed told us of a happy valley where the young Prince of Abyssinia heard lectures on high philosophy, but Dr. Johnson always wrote without a muse. Occasionally one of those "winged things" which the old Tragic poets always kept at call, when not on express duty, would make a *detour* over the Lybian Desert.

We learn too from Homer that the Olympians were wont to make a periodical family visit to Ethiopia, and sometimes when a character in the Drama was no longer wanted, he also was sent up "the fountains of the Nile" to be out of the way.

Science has sought to examine its physical characteristics—curiosity to break the mystery which enshrouds it—but its despised, almost unpitied people have awakened scarcely any other interest than that of gain. Indeed the race had an unfortunate beginning. It is descended from Ham, who seems to have been in very truth "the black sheep of the flock." When the Triumviri divided the world, one chose the land to the rising—the other to the setting sun, while the heritage of the South fell to the sable brother. The direction seems to have been unfortunate. It is a rule to which we believe History affords no exceptions, that the North and West have always prevailed against the South and East. Conquest moves eastward, colonization westward, and neither seems to have been successful in opposite directions.

Thus Xerxes with half a world in arms failed to subdue the little Peninsula of Greece, which was afterwards conquered by Northern neighbors,

and Alexander, who subdued the Eastern World so easily, was probably never one hundred miles west from his own Capital. In that direction a people was just then coming into power, who were able even then to send into the field an army fully equal to that with which he conquered the East, who perhaps would have broken his phalanx as they did that of his successors, although engaged at the time in a contest for supremacy with a powerful rival city. The permanent conquests of the Romans too were all made in Africa or the East, and they were continually harrassed, and both their Eastern and Western Empires were finally overthrown by the very Northern nations whom they had beaten in pitched battles but had failed to subdue. And it may be in no way significant, but it is at least true that Napoleon failed in his designs on England and his campaigns on the Peninsula—that all his great victories, as Marengo, Hohenlinden and Austerlitz were all south, as his reverses at Moscow, Leipsic and Waterloo were north of his Capital. In the East a company of English merchants controls whole nations, while the whole power of the English nation failed to subdue her Western Colonies while yet in their infancy. And Egypt, “the world’s eldest born,” though the patron of arts and sciences when the wild dogs yet banded on the Areopagus and the wolf had his den in the Tarpean rock, has been from time recorded the nation’s vassal. Every great conqueror from Cambyse to Napoleon has marched or fought under the shadows of her pyramids. The whole Northern coast has been marked by the blazing path of the Saracen conquest, and indeed the children of the desert carried their conquest and their creed into the heart of its barren wastes.

But beyond the great desert there is a region rich as an Oasis and watered by the majestic Niger. Both have been from early time the objects of eager inquiry, and yet within the last fifty years very little knowledge had been acquired more than that possessed by Herodotus more than twenty centuries earlier.

The Royal Geographical Society of Ptolemy were quite as correct in their views as the Royal Geographical Society of London. It is indeed strange that after so many efforts yet still so little should have been known of the source and termination of this mysterious stream. According to one theory it flowed eastwardly into the desert and was lost in its sands. Another, that it was evaporated from a great inland lake, whose superfluous waters were carried off by one of the branches of the White Nile, while a third maintained that it reached the Ocean by the

Congo, whose channel alone of all the rivers of the Western coast seemed sufficient to contain the mighty volume of waters.

In search for this river there has been displayed the most active enterprise—the truest courage and the most determined perseverance.

“This is the only thing left worth doing,” said the gallant Forbisher, as he sought for a passage between the ice mountains of the Polar Sea, but a nobler spirit animated the explorers of Africa.

Park, with the remembrance of the fate of his predecessor and the intense sufferings of his first journey, still unhesitatingly offered himself for a second, although almost assured that if the river flowed inland as was generally thought, he could never hope to return. Of the thirty-six picked men who accompanied him, but five survived the journey to the point of embarkation on the Niger, and these with himself were soon after killed by the natives. Clapperton, nevertheless, pursued the same route, and also lost his life, but the sole survivor of his party made a second attempt—solved the great problem and traced the mighty Niger to the Ocean. It was found to reach the gulf by many mouths forming a vast delta, whose base comprehends more than two hundred miles of sea coast.

The recent discovery of the Binue or Eastern branch, together with other facts, enables us to comprehend why the theories above mentioned should have been so varied and so obscure. First, a misunderstanding of the accounts of the natives seems to have arisen because of the general and indefinite meaning of the terms which they employed.

For example, one traveler, we are told, spent much time in collecting what he considered accurate and authentic accounts of the Nile. This seemed to surprise the natives, who finally asked if they had no Nile in England. On coming to a mutual understanding, it was found that Nile was a general name for running water, while by the sea was understood all water at rest.

The discovery of this river also enables us to account for the belief in the inland course of the Niger. The Kong Mountains—the lower boundary of Soudan—seemed a barrier to the progress of the river to the gulf of Guinea. Furthermore, no river was found along the coast large enough to receive its waters. And lastly, the Niger for some distance above its confluence with the Binue flows eastwardly; the two rivers flowing in nearly the same line, though of course in opposite directions. When we consider that the Arabs of the interior make no use of water communication, we may easily imagine that the existence

of a river without its direction might be known, and how it might be mistaken for a continuation rather than a branch of the Niger.

The solution of these mysteries may and will be in future time regarded as one of the great events of the century. The discovery of a river leading directly into the interior, navigable for steamboats for more than six hundred miles from the sea, and nearly five hundred above its confluence with the main stream is of the highest geographical interest.

And from the imperfect accounts of the expedition we may judge that no newly discovered country ever offered equal commercial advantages. The soil of Africa is either a desert or a garden. The fertility of the valley of the Nile and the Barbary coast has long been proverbial, and this valley seems fully equal in richness to either.

The views from the steamer presented none of the commonly conceived phases of African life. The country abounds in fine plantations of thousands of adjoining acres under continuous cultivation, populous cities, noble rivers, blooming savannahs and temple-like forests of red-wood and ebony.

The people, too, are not like the negroes of the coast, degraded still lower by slavery and the slave trade, but industrious, intelligent and favorable to foreign intercourse.

And we may hope, not as heretofore with hope alone, that at no distant period these seemingly forgotten children of our common Father may receive a portion of his blessing, that they may become enlightened and happy under the influence of that Spirit which has been the herald, the guide and the support of civilization until the "East shall be as bright as at sunrise." For the tones of their resurrection are blown.

S. T. F.

College Magazines.

It is pleasant in making one's *debut* in Editorial life, to be greeted by the good humored faces of so many cotemporaries from all parts of the country. We are glad, and somewhat surprised, that their number is so goodly. Yet why should we be surprised that the great thoughts and brilliant imaginations which live in such profusion in the brains of

all Collegians should seek many channels for utterance? Or, if we must express ourselves less enthusiastically, what can be more natural than that any collection of young men pursuing an intellectual life, old enough and wide awake enough to think upon all kinds of subjects, should wish to dabble (even if clumsily) with that instrument which more than any other controls the age? The wonder is, rather, that some of our sister Colleges are so behind-hand in the good enterprise. We should like to enquire respectfully of them—particularly the older and larger ones,—whether the fact is that they support no Magazine, or that they do not consider the Lit. a “respectable” exchange.

A glance at the exteriors of our various friends reveals to us that,—though many of them are old enough to be upon a permanent basis,—none is so well on in years as the Lit. The discovery gives us a venerable feeling which is most gratifying. We suppose they must look up to us with a reverence and awe not unlike that with which Nestor was regarded by the Greeks. We may, however, be mistaken.

Every one of these College periodicals has as truly its definite and peculiar character as their greater prototypes in the world without. Nowhere more plainly than in their Magazines, do you see the traces of the genial scholarship of Harvard, the strong good sense of Amherst, the valuable religious principle of Knox. But we had no intention of going the rounds,—either in a complimentary or disparaging strain. Doubtless every College Magazine presents at least something to be praised, and much which might well be criticized. But we are not willing to regard them as marks for criticism. They should not be, (certainly in most cases,) mere instruments for literary culture. *That* is gained through a great variety of College and Society exercises. But these magazines without losing sight of a literary aim, should be places for the expression of hearty, natural feelings and ideas, be they humorous or serious, and the consideration of subjects practically interesting. They should be places wherein the opinions of the students, in a proper way, may be declared. If this were more the case, we should be likely to see a diminution in the indecent, and sometimes unpleasantly *practical* ways of expressing them which now to a degree prevail.

But this is said to be a world where people don't appreciate their privileges, and the truth of the remark is certainly sometimes illustrated by the failure of the College world to improve the advantages which we have shown they possess for declaring their sentiments. This fact,—and a conviction which has at times come over us that the interests of